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Research Note

Tracking the *Tulpa*

Exploring the "Tibetan" Origins of a Contemporary Paranormal Idea

Natasha L. Mikles and Joseph P. Laycock

ABSTRACT: Since the 1970s, *tulpas* have been a feature of Western paranormal lore. In contemporary paranormal discourse, a *tulpa* is a being that begins in the imagination but acquires a tangible reality and sentience. *Tulpas* are created either through a deliberate act of individual will or unintentionally from the thoughts of numerous people. The *tulpa* was first described by Alexandra David-Néel (1868–1969) in *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* (1929) and is still regarded as a Tibetan concept. However, the idea of the *tulpa* is more indebted to Theosophy than to Tibetan Buddhism. This article explores the murky origins of the *tulpa* to show how the concept emerged from a dialogue between East and West in which Theosophical metaphysics were combined with terms adapted from Tibetan Buddhism.

KEYWORDS: tulpa, Theosophy, Tibet, Buddhism, thought forms, Orientalism

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On 31 May 2014, two 12-year-old girls in Waukesha, Wisconsin lured their 12-year-old friend into the forest and stabbed her. They told authorities the attack had been an attempt to contact a supernatural entity known as "Slender Man," whom they believed dwelled in the woods behind their home. "Slender Man" is an Internet phenomenon created in 2009 by Eric Knudsen for the website *Something Awful*. Knudsen's image of a faceless being in a suit with elongated limbs inspired numerous short stories, videos and games that fleshed out a mythology for the creature.[1] Eventually, some Slender Man fans claimed the character was not imaginary but an actual entity known to ancient cultures by many names. A related claim was that Slender Man originated in Knudsen's imagination but that the attention and belief of thousands of Internet users had given it a literal, supernatural existence. Proponents of this theory invariably invoked Tibetan tradition, claiming that in Tibet imagined entities can become real and even turn on their creators. Within Western paranormal discourse, such beings are known as *tulpas*, and some claimed that numerous sightings of Slender Man proved that *tulpas* are a real phenomenon.[2] Although the *tulpa* is associated with Tibetan Buddhism, philological and archival evidence suggests that the encounter between Tibetan Buddhism and Theosophy—involving both Western Orientalists and their Asian informants and translators—shifted the meaning of certain Buddhist terms and concepts. As a result, concepts of "emanations" found in Mahāyāna Buddhism came to resemble Theosophical metaphysics as well as Western tropes of creations run amok found in such stories as the golem legend and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). It appears that many of the core features of the *tulpa* are—like Slender Man—the product of Western paranormal folklore.

The earliest mention of *tulpas* appeared in *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* (1929) by Alexandra David-Néel (1868–1969), who defined *tulpa* as "phantoms." She explained that *tulpas* were related to *tülkus,* which she said were "forms created by magic."[3] In Tibetan Buddhism, *tülku* is a translation of the Sanskrit *nirmāṇakāya*—a technical religious term describing the third of the bodies (*kaya*) of a buddha, the emanation body. In traditional Mahāyāna doctrine—formally codified in fourth-century CE Yogācāra treatises such as *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* and the *Mahāyānasamgraha*—buddhas (and sometimes bodhisattvas) possess three "bodies" or forms: a cosmic "truth" body (*dharmakāya),* an "enjoyment" body *(sambhogakāya),* and a *nirmāṇakāya* body that enlightened beings manifest into the physical world to help suffering beings.[4] By David-Néel's own admission, the difference between *tulpa* and *tülku* is murky; *tulpas* are created by magicians while *tülkus* are an aspect of buddhas and bodhisattvas and are more enduring.[5] She claimed to have created a *tulpa* using "prescribed concentration of thought and other rites" while in Tibet. David-Néel gave her *tulpa* the form of a jolly Western monk so it would not be confused with Tibetan deities. A Tibetan herdsman

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reportedly could see the monk, proving it had an independent existence, but David-Néel was forced to destroy her creation when it became too willful.[6]

Tülkus and *tulpas* appear again in Walter Evans-Wentz' (1878–1965) version of *The Tibetan Book of Great Liberation* (1954), where he built on David-Néel's distinction.

> The Tibetans call the One Mind's concretized visualization the *Khorva (Hkhorva)*, equivalent to the Sanskrit Sangsara [*samsara*]; that of an incarnate deity, like the Dalai or Tashi Lama [Panchen Lama], they call a *Tul-ku (Sprul-sku)*, and that of a magician a *Tul-pa (Sprul-pa)*, meaning a magically produced illusion or creation.[7]

Significantly, both David-Néel and Evans-Wentz had backgrounds in Theosophy and relied on the translation services of Kazi Dawa Samdup (1868–1923), who was educated at the Butia Boarding School in Darjeeling, a school created to train interpreters and geographers to advance British interests in Tibet.[8] Samdup became an important interpreter for the British and an influential translator. Although not a monk, he apparently had an interest in religion and esotericism. David-Néel described him as "an occultist and even, in a certain way, a mystic."[9] Whatever Samdup's metaphysical interests were, they almost certainly shaped how David-Néel and Evans-Wentz came to understand *tulpas*.

While David-Néel claimed that *tulpas* were "grounded on the same theories"[10] as ideas about emanations found in Tibetan Buddhism, her description of *tulpas* was more consistent with Theosophical literature about "thought-forms" written by Annie Besant (1847–1933) in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries than with Buddhist ideas of *tülkus*. In Tibetan tradition, buddhas and highly advanced practitioners can create emanations which then act as extensions of their creator. By contrast, thought-forms discussed by Theosophists, *tulpas* described by David-Néel, and Slender Man lore described by literally anyone often are created unintentionally and can turn on their creators. While there is anecdotal evidence that a phantom fitting this description possibly could feature in some vernacular forms of Tibetan Buddhism, it seems more likely that the *tulpa* of contemporary paranormal discourse originated with nineteenth-century Western esotericists, attributed to Tibetan Buddhism by early-twentieth-century adventurers, and rediscovered by modern paranormal lore as a "Tibetan" concept.

THE TULPA IN CONTEMPORARY FOLKLORE

The first contemporary paranormal writer to invoke the *tulpa* likely was John Keel (1930–2009) in his 1975 book, *The Mothman Prophecies,* in which he discussed a reported haunting in New York's Greenwich

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Village of a house formerly owned by Walter Gibson (1897–1985), author of *The Shadow* series of pulp novels. Occupants described an apparition in a cape and slouch hat—the same garb worn by Gibson's fictional character. "The Tibetans," Keel wrote, "believe that advanced human minds can manipulate these invisible energies into visible forms called *tulpas,* or thought projections. Did Walter Gibson's intense concentration on his Shadow novels inadvertently bring a *tulpa* into existence?"[11] In his investigations, Keel often found that reports of paranormal phenomena resembled ideas and images that had appeared in popular fiction. He theorized that the phenomena were *real* but misidentified as ghosts or extra-terrestrials, when in reality they were *tulpas.*

The *tulpa* subsequently appeared in the work of other paranormal writers, such as Brad Steiger (b. 1936):

> According to certain Eastern metaphysicians, thoughts, emotions, and mental emanations add to the strength of the Tulpa, enabling it to accumulate power and grow. . . . Sometimes, however, even the most accomplished of adepts and magicians confess that the phantom, or Tulpa, becomes rebellious and may conduct itself independently of its creator.[12]

Steiger built on Keel's interpretation, hinting that the *tulpa* was not only uncanny but dangerous. Catholic demonologists Ed (1926–2006) and Lorraine (b. 1927) Warren also invoked *tulpa* lore. In a film of the Warrens' museum of "occult" objects, Ed presented a Halloween mask and explained that it could be used in black magic rituals to create "a physical manifestation of a *tulpa.*"[13]

In these cases, the *tulpa* served to keep paranormal theories alive in the face of contradictory evidence. Keel used *tulpa* lore to counter arguments that reports of ghosts and UFOs are inspired by pop culture and have no paranormal basis, while Warren used the idea of the *tulpa* to argue that a quotidian Halloween prop could be a paranormal artifact. This is the same interpretive move made by those who claim that Slender Man's origin as a fictional character does not disprove alleged sightings of an actual Slender Man.

Aside from paranormal theories and practices, television has become a key vector through which *tulpa* lore is disseminated. Television *tulpas* invariably are connected to Asia and, like David-Néel's monk, always turn on their creators. In the *X-Files* episode "Arcadia" (1999), FBI agents Mulder and Scully investigate a series of murders in a suburban neighborhood. The head of the homeowners' association has traveled to Asia, where he learned the secret of making *tulpas.* He programs his *tulpa* to take physical form and slay anyone who breaks the association's rules. In the end, he is killed by his own creation. In the *Supernatural* episode "Hell House" (2006), a ghost is murdering teenagers in an abandoned house. Much like Keel's theory of the Walter Gibson house,

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Sam and Dean Winchester (brothers who travel the country slaying monsters) discover that the "ghost" actually is a *tulpa* that derives its power from a website where teenagers share legends about the haunted house and its ghost. Again, the *tulpa* is framed as a Tibetan phenomenon. A Tibetan letter (*ni*) painted in the house by teenage vandals serves as a "psychic anchor" that allows the *tulpa* to manifest. "So there was an incident in Tibet in 1950," Sam explains. "A group of monks visualize a golem in their heads, then meditate on it so hard, they bring the thing to life out of thin air. . . . That was twenty monks. Imagine what ten thousand Web surfers can do?"[14] Neither special training nor intense concentration is required to create a *tulpa*—only the belief of numerous people.

Tulpa mythology appeared a second time in the *Supernatural* episode "#ThinMan" (2014), in which people are murdered by an online creature called "ThinMan"—an obvious homage to Slender Man. Sam and Dean suspect ThinMan is a *tulpa* until they discover that the killers actually are a pair of ordinary humans who want to convince the world that ThinMan is real. The episode eerily presaged the Waukesha stabbing later that spring, in which one perpetrator stated, "Many people do not believe Slender Man is real. [We] wanted to prove the skeptics wrong."[15]

From these depictions in paranormal discourse and popular culture, it is possible to characterize the contemporary paranormal *tulpa* as an entity that can be created by anyone, usually inadvertently; exists independently of its creator(s);[16] is sentient and capable of rebellion; and is frightening, if not dangerous. As we will see, there is little precedent for such an entity in Tibetan archival sources.

TÜLKUS, TUPLAS AND SPRUL-PAS

In the Wylie system of transliterating Tibetan, the *tulpa* of Evans-Wentz and David-Néel is more commonly transliterated as *sprul-pa*, the nominalized form of the verb "*sprul ba,*" meaning to emanate, manifest or display.[17] Some dictionaries note that *sprul pa* can act as a verb, but it primarily is used as a noun.[18] The root, *sprul*, is the same used in *sprul sku,* commonly spelled in English as *tülku*, a reincarnated spiritual figure such as the Dalai Lama or Karmapa (leader of the Karma Kagyu sect). As explained above, *sprul sku* is the Tibetan rendering of the Sanskrit *nirmāṇakāya*—the body of the buddha manifest in this world to teach suffering beings; for this reason, advanced spiritual teachers who reincarnate continuously for the sake of suffering beings are called *tülku*s. As explored by Tibetanist Jeffrey Hopkins, *sprul pa* has a similar usage as *sprul sku,* so that an advanced spiritual practitioner can *sprul pa mdzad,* "make a manifestation."[19]

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Nawang Thokmey, archivist for the University of Virginia Tibetan manuscript collection, elaborated on the equivalence of *sprul pa* and *sprul sku,* confirming that both words indicate an enlightened being's manifestation. He referenced two further colloquial uses of the verb stem *sprul* that are not necessarily situated within a Buddhist context: the particle *rdzus* (fake) linked with *sprul* refers to a trick or illusion created by a stage magician, and the word *lha* (god) attached to *sprul* indicates a specific non-corporeal being that manifests by temporarily possessing individuals.[20] Thokmey emphasized that *sprul pa* were never thought of as arising from sheer thought or belief but rather resulted from a magician's craft (*rsdzus sprul*), a non-corporeal spirit (*lha sprul),* or a buddha (*sprul pa*). He also explained that the colloquial uses of *sprul—rdzus sprul* and *lha sprul*—seldom were used, in contrast with the widespread use of the nominalized verb *sprul pa.*

In indigenous Tibetan writing, the verb stem "*sprul*" and the noun "*sprul pa*" are intimately associated with the compassionate action of an enlightened being or buddha manifesting in the world. There are seven instances of the word *sprul pa* in the Derge catalog of the Tibetan Kangyur (*bka' 'gyur*—words of the Buddha) and Tengyur (*bstan 'gyur*—commentaries on the Buddha's words), all of which relate the word to the biography of a Buddhist teacher presented as an emanation of a cosmic buddha or bodhisattva.[21] *Sprul pa* appears eighty-four times in a recent catalog of the Nyingma Gyübum (*rnying ma rgyud 'bum)*—the esoteric canon of the Nyingma school; like the Derge canon, these refer to actions of a powerful, esoteric religious figure emanating into the world, often as a specific religious teacher, to save all beings.[22] In a handful of texts, *sprul pa* is used as a point of comparison to say that something (often the world as we know it) is illusory, calling to mind the colloquial definition of *rdzus sprul* or a magician's trick. While Evans-Wentz and David-Néel do not directly contradict the traditional use of the nominalized verb *sprul pa* found in Tibetan writings, by emphasizing emanations as a scientific/magical phenomenon they effectively divorce this concept from the soteriological functions it serves within a Buddhist framework. Without this move it is doubtful that the contemporary paranormal *tulpa* would have been possible.

David-Néel introduced the notion that emanations can be created unintentionally or through collective belief, an idea that appears to be unprecedented in Tibetan Buddhism. Tibetan makes a distinction between voluntary and involuntary verbs; "I *broke* the cup" and "the cup *broke*" employ different verbs to express this fundamental difference in intent and activity. A seminal Tibetan-language dictionary—the *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*—categorizes the verb *sprul ba* as active, meaning that someone intentionally emanates or manifests something when they are "*sprul*-ing," so to speak.[23] This signifier of intention contradicts the idea found in Western *tulpa* lore that collective thought can inadvertently

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bring supernatural beings into existence. This aspect has its origins in Theosophy, and John Keel helped make the idea of "accidental" *tulpas* more explicit in contemporary paranormal discourse.

THEOSOPHICAL "THOUGHT-FORMS"

Decades before Evans-Wentz and David-Néel traveled to Asia, Theosophists in London were discussing "thought-forms" or entities created inadvertently from thoughts. One of the earliest references to such a thought-form appears in an article by Sepharial (Dr. Walter Gorn Old (1864–1929), a founding member of the Theosophical Society in England) in the Theosophical Journal *Lucifer* (1891–1892). Sepharial related an anecdote in which he was sent to the basement to draw a jug of beer from a keg. He absent-mindedly poured the beer into a basket that held the key to the basement and dropped the key into the jug intended for the beer. He failed to realize his mistake until he set the basket on the dinner table, where it leaked beer onto the table. Someone suggested that he had suffered a kind of hallucination and had imposed the "thought-form" of the jug onto the basket. Although the thought-form in this story did not gain physicality or sentience, it formed without the intention or realization of its creator.[24]

Subsequent writings by Theosophist Annie Besant expanded the notion of thought-form, which she defined as "a mental image, created—or moulded—by the mind out of the subtle matter of the higher psychic plane."[25] Besant claimed that ideas had a kind of physical existence but could only be seen by special people such as clairvoyants or hypnotized patients. Thoughts had consequences because they were a kind of subtle matter that attracted or repelled other subtle forces. Everyone created thought-forms all the time and experienced a variety of effects as a result of either their wholesome or unwholesome thoughts.

An important shift occurred in Besant's 1895 article "Karma," in which she introduced "ensouled thought-forms" that attracted quasi-sentient metaphysical forces called Elementals—a concept that first appeared in the writings of Helena Blavatsky (1831–1891). The Elemental "enters into the thought-form, playing to it the part of a Soul, and thus an independent entity is made in the astral world."[26] Benevolent Elementals were drawn to positive thoughts while destructive ones were attracted to negative thoughts, such that "Angels and demons of our creating throng round us on every side."[27] Especially powerful entities were created collectively. "When a man sends out a thought-form it not only keeps up a magnetic link with him but is drawn towards other thought-forms of a similar type, and these congregating together on the astral plane form a good or evil force, as the case may be, embodied in a kind of collective entity."[28]

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Besant's ideas spread widely through European occult circles, and by 1903 English Theosophist Bertram Keightley (1860–1944) suggested that reports of ghosts might actually be thought-forms rather than spirits of the dead, an idea later advocated by Keel and others.[29] Dion Fortune (1890–1946) called such entities "artificial elementals" that were "distinguished from thought-forms by the fact that, once formulated by the creative mind of the magician," they possessed a "distinct and independent life of their own. . . ."[30] In 1930, Fortune described how her rage at someone who had wronged her caused her to accidentally create a sentient thought-form she termed a "were-wolf." Calling the ectoplasmic creature "a Frankenstein's monster," Fortune was forced to draw the entity back into herself before it could cause any harm. These Western ideas of inadvertently created, frightening and dangerous thought-forms are the true provenance of the *tulpa* as described by David-Néel and promoted in contemporary paranormal lore.

CONCLUSION

Scholars such as Donald Lopez have noted that Westerners have long harbored romantic notions about Tibet. The Theosophical Society in particular has promoted Tibet as the land of Hidden Masters.[31] The history of the *tulpa* could be read as a case of Theosophists appropriating a term from Tibetan Buddhism to give their own esoteric ideas some Orientalist "window dressing." This view, however, presents Tibet as a closed totality and ignores the agency of figures such as Kazi Dawa Samdup in translating complex ideas between cultures. A better historiography might resemble Mark Singleton's recent work on postural yoga, which notes that what most Westerners call yoga is a homonym rather than a synonym for the *yoga* of precolonial Hindu tradition. Singleton historicizes modern postural yoga as the product of a dialogue between India and an early-twentieth-century international physical culture movement.[32] Perhaps the contemporary paranormal *tulpa*, which takes its concept from Theosophy and its name from a Tibetan root word, may be regarded as a similar product of this early twentieth-century, East-West dialogue, situated in a context of distinctly unequal power relationships but still containing both Tibetan and European voices. It is possible that the fusion of Theosophy and Tibetan Buddhism evident in *tulpa* lore originated with the collaboration of Evans-Wentz and Samdup. The terms "thought-form" and "elemental" appear in Samdup's translation of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1927), which he wrote while working closely with Evans-Wentz.[33] Samdup was described as having an interest in esotericism and may have been as eager to assimilate Theosophy as the Theosophists were to assimilate Tibetan Buddhism. Thus the *tulpa* may truly be a creature built from collective

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imagination—not only of multiple individuals, but multiple cultures exchanging ideas and terms.

The concept of the *tulpa* continues to evolve and adopt other influences. An online community of "tulpamancers"[34] has emerged among individuals who feel they have relationships with *tulpa*s they have created. In his online study of 166 tulpamancers, located mostly in the United States and Western Europe, psychiatrist Samuel Veissiere concluded that most are male, 17 to 34 years old, who score high on psychological indices of shyness. The *tulpas* in the study functioned much like imaginary friends providing their creators with companionship, and a significant subset of the tulpamancers also identified as "bronies" (male fans of "My Little Pony"), reporting that their *tulpa*s appeared to them as anthropomorphic ponies.[35] Much as Eric Knudsen's Slender Man attracted an Internet mythology that formed around him, David-Néel's stories of Tibet continue to haunt the Western imagination by assuming strange new forms.

ENDNOTES

[1] Joseph Laycock, "'Slender Man' Murder Attempt Wasn't Media or Madness," *Religion Dispatches* (4 June 2014); at http://religiondispatches.org/slender-man-murder-attempt-wasnt-media-or-madness/; accessed 15 March 2015. For an analysis of Slender Man before the stabbing, see Line Henriksen, "A Short Bestiary of Creatures from the Web," in ed. Olu Jenzen and Sally R. Munt *The Ashgate Research Companion to Paranormal Cultures* (Burlington Vt.: Ashgate, 2013): 405–16.

[2] For a discussion of the "*tulpa*-theory" of Slender Man, see Li'l Andy K, "Your Mind Makes it Real/Slendermemes," *Slenderboggins* (1 December 2010); at http://slenderbloggins.wordpress.com/2010/12/01/your-mind-makes-it-realslendermemes/; accessed 15 March 15.

[3] Alexandra David-Néel, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* (New York: Dover Publications, 1971) 120–21.

[4] The *tülku* concept is described succinctly in Paul Williams' *Buddhist Thought: A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2000) 172–76. Note 6 on page 266 offers a more thorough analysis.

[5] David-Néel, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet,* 120–21.

[6] David-Néel, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet,* 313–14. David-Néel's account of her sinister monk *tulpa* bears a vague resemblance to Anton Chekhov's story "The Black Monk" (1894), in which scholar Andrey Kovrin sees an apparition of a sinister black monk and is uncertain whether he himself is mad or the monk has an independent existence. Both phantom monks are described as "sly" and vaguely menacing. David-Néel describes her *tulpa* thus: "The fat chubby-cheeked fellow grew leaner, his face assumed a vaguely mocking, sly, malignant look." Compare this to Chekhov's black monk: "After he had floated twenty feet beyond him, he looked round at Kovrin, and nodded to him with a friendly but sly smile. But what a pale, fearfully pale, thin face!" See Anton Pavlovich Chekhov,

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The Black Monk and Other Stories, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Sovereign, 2012), 14.

[7] Walter Y. Evans-Wentz, *The Tibetan Book of Great Liberation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 29.

[8] Derek Wallers, *The Pundits: British Exploration of Tibet and Central Asia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), 193.

[9] Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: A Biography* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011), 75–76.

[10] David-Néel, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet,* 314.

[11] John A. Keel, *The Mothman Prophecies* (New York: Tor, Signet, 1975), 6–7.

[12] Brad Steiger, *Real Zombies: The Living Dead and Creatures of the Apocalypse* (Canton, Mich.: Visible Ink Press, 2010), 235. A review of *tulpa* theories in Ufology literature appears in Peter M. Rojcewicz, "The 'Men in Black' Experience and Tradition: Analogues with Traditional Devil Hypothesis," *The Journal of American Folklore* 100, no. 396 (April-June 1987): 148–60.

[13] Ed and Lorraine Warren, "Ed and Lorraine Warren: The Occult Museum" (8 October 2009), at www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5O3ZydB1xo; accessed 15 March 15.

[14] In addition to television, Jeffrey Kripal discusses the significance of *tulpas* in the work of comic-book creator Alvin Schwartz, who was influenced by Evans-Wentz and in his own autobiography speculated that Superman had become a *tulpa.* See Jeffrey J. Kripal, *Mutants and Mystics: Science Fiction, Superhero Comics, and the Paranormal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011): 241–47.

[15] Caitlin Dewey, "The complete, terrifying history of 'Slender Man,' the Internet meme that compelled two 12-year-olds to stab their friend," *The Washington Post* (3 June 2014); at www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/06/03/the-complete-terrifying-history-of-slender-man-the-internet-meme-that-compelled-two-12-year-olds-to-stab-their-friend/; accessed 15 March 2015.

[16] Keel suggests Gibson's *tulpa* endured long after its creator's death.

[17] *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (Beijing: Min tsu chu pan she, 1993), 1690.

[18] Jeffrey Hopkins lists *sprul-pa* as both a noun and verb. *Tibetan-Sanskrit-English Dictionary,* Tibetan-Himalayan Digital Library, 311; at www.thlib.org/reference/spt/SPT—FullRecord.php?ResourceId=5105; accessed 15 March 2015.

[19] Jeffrey Hopkins, *Tibetan-Sanskrit-English Dictionary,* 311.

[20] Interview with Nawang Thokmey, 22 July 2014.

[21] Taking only a select number of examples, there is the colophon of D 1359 (*jig rten dbang phyug gi sprul pa'i sku pad+ma dkar pos mdzad pa rdzogs so* [The Perfected Work of Emanation [*sprul pa*] of the White Lotus, who is Jikten Wangchuk]). Chapter Title of D 845 (*rdo rje bkod pa'i dkyil 'khor sprul pa'i le'u stab co gcig pa* [Chapter 11: The chapter of emanating [*sprul pa*] the mandala of the Vajra Structure]).

[22] One example is the text title of Ng. 966 (*rdo rje khyung nag gi rgyud rin po che'i sprul pa* [The Emanation [*sprul pa*] of the Precious Mind Continuum of the Vajra Black Garuda]). All literature searches were conducted through the Tibetan and Himalayan Digital Library.

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[23] In his *New Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan,* Melvyn C. Goldstein states that the verb "*sprul"* is involuntary, though he notes it easily can be made to be an active verb with the addition of an active modal verb. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) 669–70.

[24] Sepharial, "My Remembered Self: The Experience of An Astral Tramp," *Lucifer* Vol. 9 (September 1891-February 1892): 113.

[25] Annie Besant, "Karma," *Lucifer* 1, no. 91 (15 March 1895): 384. For more of Besant's writings on thought-forms see Annie Besant, "On Reincarnation," *Lucifer* Vol. 10 (March-August 1892): 55–308; and Annie Besant and Charles C.W. Leadbeater, *Thought-Forms* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2005).

[26] Besant, "On Karma," 385.

[27] Besant, "On Karma," 386.

[28] Besant, "On Karma," 388.

[29] Bertram Keightley, "The Problem of Post-Mortem Communications," *The Theosophical Review* 32 (March-August 1903): 419.

[30] Dion Fortune, *Psychic Self-Defense* (York Beach, Me: Samuel Weiser, 1993), 52.

[31] Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). Lopez' critics have argued that his assessment gives no agency to Tibetans and presents Tibet as a static and closed totality that changes only through the interference of Orientalists. See Georges Dreyfus, "Are We Prisoners of Shangrila? Orientalism, Nationalism, and the Study of Tibet," *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, no. 1 (October 2005): 1–21; at www.thlib.org/collections/texts/jiats/#!jiats=/01/dreyfus/; accessed 15 March 2015; Tsering Shakya, "Review Essay: Who are the Prisoners?" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69, no. 1 (2001): 183.

[32] Mark Singleton, *Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[33] Walter Y. Evans-Wentz, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead or The Afterdeath Experiences on the Bardo Plane, According to Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup's English Rendering* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960).

[34] For more on tulpamancers, see Nathan Thompson, "Meet the 'Tulpamancers': Internet's Newest Subculture is Incredibly Weird," *Vice* (3 September 2014); at www.vice.com/en_uk/read/tulpamancy-internet-subculture-892; accessed 15 March 2015.

[35] Samuel Veissiere, "Talking to Tulpas: Sentient Imaginary Friends, The Social Mind, and Implications for Culture, Cognition, and Mental Health Research" (Draft summary, rev. 5 September 2014); at www.academia.edu/8124455/Talking_to_Tulpas_Sentient_Imaginary_Friends_the_Social_Mind_and_Implications_for_Culture_Cognition_and_Mental_Health_Research; accessed 25 March 2015.

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